



# EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

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## *Issues facing the 70th General Convention in Phoenix:*

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The Moscow meeting was a follow-up to the held last fall in the United States at which a Joint Commissioning Committee was established to work on a wide range of ecumenical issues. The idea for the committee originated from an official 1987 visit to the Soviet Union by Presiding Bishop Joseph Heistand.

"We were somewhat surprised by the warmth of our reception," said the Rev. William Norgren, ecumenical officer of the Episcopal Church. "We met them with the patriarch, a clear signal that he is personally honored and committed to the work of our committee."

The committee is shaping a set of proposals for cooperation between the two churches in areas such as youth work, social ministries, religious education, communication, and the role of bishops in the life of the church.

"The church in the Soviet Union is entering a very exciting time—but one with overwhelming problems," said Bishop Roger White of Milwaukee, head of the delegation. After 70 years of persecution and severe restrictions on its ministry, the church finds itself with vast new opportunities for mission in Soviet society.

"Suddenly people—including the head of state—are looking to the church for spiritual leadership," Norgren added. "People are literally crowding the streets of Moscow. Most parishes are having an average of 250 persons each Sunday. There is a tremendous yearning for religious experience and deeper understanding."

The church is committed to respond, but in order to do so it must train its people and develop education and other ministries, members of the delegation agreed.

Norgren said that there is a "centuries-old rancor" between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion, a rift developed over a century. As a sign of that trust, the group was taken to meet people in village parishes and children in orphanages.

"This is a church that recently celebrated a millennium anniversary," Norgren said. "It has a rich history, with roots that go deep into the Russian culture. It has also experienced periods of persecution—and it now faces a



91117

## Episcopalians and Russian Orthodox begin new era of cooperation

Relations between the Episcopal Church and the Russian Orthodox Church entered a new era, according to a team of four Episcopalians who returned from an official visit to Moscow at the invitation of Patriarch Alexy II.

The Moscow meeting was a follow-up to one held last fall in the United States at which a Joint Coordinating Committee was established to work on a wide range of common issues. The idea for the committee stemmed from an official 1989 visit to the Soviet Union by Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning.

"We were somewhat surprised by the warmth of our reception," said the Rev. William Norgren, ecumenical officer of the Episcopal Church. "We met three times with the patriarch, a clear signal that he is personally involved and committed to the work of our committee."

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"Suddenly people--including the head of state--are looking to the church for spiritual leadership," Norgren added. "People are literally throwing themselves at the church. Most parishes are baptizing an average of 250 persons each Sunday. There is a tremendous yearning for religious experience and deeper understanding."

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"This is a church that recently celebrated a millennium anniversary," Norgren said. "It has a rich history, with roots that go deep into the Russian culture. It has also experienced periods of persecution--and it now faces a



huge mission challenge within an officially secular nation. We hope to offer whatever help we can as they face that challenge," he concluded.

In addition to White and Norgren, the delegation included Dr. J. Robert Wright of General Seminary in New York and Suzanne Massie, fellow at Harvard University's Russian Research Center.

91118

## **Episcopal publications receive awards at ACP convention**

Episcopal publications from across the country received several top awards at the 75th anniversary of the Associated Church Press (ACP) in St. Louis, Missouri, on April 29.

The ACP, an association of more than 200 denominational and interdenominational publications in Canada and the United States, received more than 800 entries in 29 categories in this year's competition, which was judged by a panel of five professors at the University of Missouri School of Journalism.

*Episcopal News*, the diocesan publication of Los Angeles, won three awards, including the General Excellence award for newspapers. The newspaper, edited by Ruth Nicastro, also received the award for best front page, and an honorable mention for best news story.

*Episcopal Life* was presented with three awards, including best photography for its November 1990 issue, best department, and an honorable mention in the General Excellence category for newspapers.

The Episcopal News Service received two awards, including best news story and best interview for a publication with a circulation under 10,000.

*The Witness* received three awards, including best feature writing for a magazine with a circulation under 10,000, and editorial writing by Susan Pierce.

*The Record*, diocesan newspaper in Michigan, received an award for best feature article in a newspaper with a circulation under 10,000.

*Trinity News*, magazine of Trinity Parish in New York, received an award for a series of stories for in-depth coverage of a current issue in a magazine with a circulation under 10,000.



The winter issue of *Books and Religion*, published by Trinity Parish in New York, received an award for best critical review, and an honorable mention as best special interest magazine.

*The Episcopal Teacher*, published at Virginia Theological Seminary, received an award for a series of issues for in-depth coverage of a current issue in a publication with a circulation under 10,000.

*The Washington Diocese*, newspaper of the Diocese of Washington, received honorable mention for its front page in the April issue. *The Communicant*, newspaper for the Diocese of North Carolina, received honorable mention for the category Best Theological Reflection.

91119

## No shortage of controversial topics at General Convention in Phoenix

by James Solheim

When Episcopalians gather for their triennial General Convention in Phoenix this summer there is no way they can avoid the issue of sexuality. Or racism. Or the environment.

Yet the 1,100 bishops and deputies to the July meeting will be asked to deal with about 500 resolutions on a bewildering range of topics. And what they decide--or don't decide--will determine the shape and direction of the Episcopal Church for the next three years.

**Sexuality** The convention will be offered two options on stating its mind on sexual morality, especially as it relates to qualifications for ordained ministry. One would leave the question of qualifications for all candidates for the ministry--including homosexuals--to the diocesan bishop and committees. The other proposal would effectively prohibit the ordination of noncelibate homosexual candidates by affirming the church's traditional position on sexual morality and marriage in the form of a canon law.

The General Convention has tried on several occasions to settle the issue, without success. The church's present position goes back to the 1979 General Convention, which said it was "not appropriate" to ordain practicing homosexuals. A number of bishops signed a dissenting statement and said it



was up to the dioceses to decide on candidates. A recommendation from the Standing Commission on Human Affairs effectively endorses that position and removes the 1979 proscription.

In an effort to settle the issue and clearly define the church's expectations, the canon law proposal by Bishop William Frey, dean of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Pennsylvania, would place clergy under the obligation to abstain from sexual relations outside of marriage. "The sexuality tail is wagging the dog," Frey said in arguing that it is time to move on to other issues.

**Racism** If sexuality will be a major topic at the General Convention, controversy will give another issue heightened visibility. The church's commitment to racial justice was questioned when the church decided to meet in Phoenix even though the state of Arizona does not have a paid state holiday honoring slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr.

The issue threatened to polarize the church. After several months of listening to those who argued for a boycott and those who said the church would make a better witness by going to Phoenix, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning called a special meeting of the Executive Council. "God has given us Arizona as a gift--as a place to go, to stand, to hope, to confess our own racism, and to witness to justice," Browning said. Admitting that it was "a most difficult choice," Browning added, "In Arizona God is asking the church in all its pain, suffering, and confusion to come in the spirit of St. Paul to share the sufferings of one another."

The council endorsed the selection of Phoenix and asked for significant alterations in the convention, highlighting racial justice and calling for a simpler lifestyle for church members at the meeting. It also established a scholarship to honor King, with seed money generated from savings made through changes in convention exhibits.

**Environment** For years now a quiet momentum has been building in the Episcopal Church on the issue of environment. Bolstered by a resolution from the last General Convention that called for development of a statement of policy and plan of action "regarding stewardship of the global environment," the presiding bishop authorized a Consultation on the Environment and Sustainable Development.

The consultation's report stressed the urgency of a response from the church, as well as detailed recommendations. As a follow-up the Executive Council spent several meetings discussing the issue before adopted an environmental policy and implementation plan that integrates environmental integrity and economic justice.

The General Convention will be asked to establish an Office of



environment and sustainable development and set aside \$100,000 to implement the plan. Some observers are suggesting that the environment issue will attract a great deal of support because it offers a safe alternative to the controversial topics on the convention's agenda.

**Evangelism** The Episcopal Church is a year into the Decade of Evangelism, and it is still arguing over what evangelism means and how to do it. The General Convention will likely affirm the 1973 definition of *evangelism* as "the presentation of Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in such ways that persons may be led to accept him as savior, and follow him as Lord, within the fellowship of the church."

For some Episcopalians the proclamation is the most important facet of evangelism; for others the emphasis is on "doing" the faith. The Rev. Wayne Schwab, staff officer for evangelism, argues for a holistic approach as combining word and deed and "producing people who are conscious agents of Christ's reign wherever they are."

The church is engaged in intense discussion on some of the details, however. Does one evangelize believers in other religions, for example? Is the ultimate purpose of evangelism church growth, or will that happen as a result of our faithful witness?

The key to evangelism Episcopal style may lie in that unique combination of strains that make up the church: evangelical, catholic, charismatic, and liberal. "Each has a function in the church--evangelicals emphasize Scripture, catholics emphasize the liturgy, charismatics emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit, and liberals emphasize inclusiveness and social service," said Dr. Lynn Huber.

**Finances** In common with most other denominations, the Episcopal Church is experiencing a financial crunch. Although giving is very strong at the parish level, less is being sent on to the diocese as parishes struggle with increased costs--and respond to local challenges. The dioceses, caught between lower receipts from local parishes and an assessment from the national church, in turn must decide whether to share that pain with the national church by holding back on their assessments.

The financial crunch is provoking a wide-ranging discussion on the identity of the church and the connections between parishes and dioceses and the dioceses and the national church. "We must take a hard look at what the church can do best--and turn our attention to the needs of our constituency, the people in the pew," said Vince Currie of the Diocese of Central Gulf Coast. He chaired the administration, budget, and finance committee of the Executive Council for the last three years. He argues that the church must build trust and confidence on all levels of church life, "and then the money for our



mission will follow."

One of the major responsibilities of the General Convention is to set the priorities and allocate funds for the church's mission. As one observer said, that may be the most theological decision the convention will make.

The General Convention will be asked to speak its mind on a wide variety of topics, including a number of resolutions dealing with international issues.

Two topics likely to provoke discussion are a proposal to endorse a study process that would eventually lead to full communion and interchangeability of clergy with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America--even though that church has voted to delay the process; and a proposal to "continue to study, develop, and evaluate supplemental inclusive language texts" as directed by previous General Conventions and authorize use of Supplemental Liturgical Materials for use in the next triennium.





# news briefs

91120

## **Religious leaders urge amnesty for objectors to Gulf war**

Sixteen national religious leaders have called for a legal amnesty for U.S. military personnel whose consciences prevented them from taking up arms during the war in the Persian Gulf. The plea--whose signatories included Episcopal Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning--came in a May 10 letter addressed to President Bush, Congress, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Expressing their belief that "unnecessary difficulties have been created for those in the military who...attempted to legally apply for conscientious objector status and discharge from the service," the religious leaders urged the "healing act" of amnesty, and an end to "the punishment, trials, and imprisonment of objectors." Other signers included the Rev. Joan Campbell, general secretary of the National Council of Churches; the Rev. Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Dr. Patricia Rumer, general director of Church Women United; James Lapp, general secretary of the Mennonite Church; and the Rev. William Schulz, head of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The letter was drafted and coordinated by the Philadelphia-based American Friends Service Committee.

## **RC bishops also call for amnesty for Gulf war resisters**

Thirty-three Roman Catholic bishops have appealed to President Bush to grant amnesty to U.S. military personnel who refused to serve in the war in the Persian Gulf on moral grounds. The bishops, who made their views known in an April 25 letter issued by Pax Christi USA, the national Roman Catholic peace movement, called on the U.S. military to recognize the right of selective conscientious objection. The Pax Christi letter said that "even though they [the war resisters] volunteered for military service, their obligation to make an informed moral judgment led them to refuse to take up arms in the same way that the moral judgment of many of their comrades led them to fight



in this war. In doing so, those who chose to fight and those who chose not to were fulfilling their highest moral and patriotic duty." Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit, president of Pax Christi USA, said at an earlier press conference that "by not recognizing selective conscientious objection, the government refuses to give the [Roman] Catholic Church's just war teachings the same legal protection it gives to the peace churches' pacifist teachings." In 1980, the U.S. Catholic Conference declared its support for selective conscientious objection. A number of the 1,500 servicemen and women who have applied for conscientious objector status now face court-martials, according to Pax Christi.

### **British government to fund cathedral restoration**

Responding to a 1990 appeal of Robert Runcie, then archbishop of Canterbury, the British government said it will provide about \$20 million for the restoration and maintenance of England's deteriorating cathedrals. A number of them face closing for reasons of safety. While welcoming the government plan, Lord Montague of Beaulieu, chairman of the charity that will administer the grant, characterized the proposed sum as a "drop in the ocean" but expressed optimism that the grant would prompt much-needed donations from private sources. Both Anglican and Roman Catholic cathedrals will be recipients of the government plan. Prior to this year, only a limited number of church buildings in England--mainly those serving the government, royalty, the military, and penal institutions--were awarded government funds.

### **Poll finds Americans ambiguous on "justness" of Gulf war**

Seventy-four percent of Americans viewed the war in the Persian Gulf as "just," even though only 49 percent believed the war met the Christian criteria for a "just war," according to a recently released Gallup poll. The survey was conducted February 7-10, just prior to the ground phase of the war. In comparing the conflict to earlier wars, 89 percent said World War II was a just war, while only 25 percent viewed the Vietnam War as just. Of the six "just-war" criteria, the weakest backing was found for the requirement that the positive results of military action should clearly outweigh the negative, with that expectation gaining an affirmative answer from 72 percent of the respondents. In analyzing the findings, pollster George Gallup, Jr., implied that the war seemed to create a momentum of its own. Gallup noted that the survey found that only 17 percent considered war an outmoded means of settling international disputes, compared with 48 percent who found war an unacceptable means of conflict resolution in March 1990.



## **Associated Parishes commends work of SLC**

The Council of Associated Parishes, meeting in Rochester, New York, April 24-29, commended the Episcopal Church's Standing Liturgical Commission (SLC) for its creation of a new resource book of liturgical materials, and urged General Convention to approve those texts in Phoenix. If approved by General Convention, the SLC's *Supplemental Liturgical Materials* would be made available for general use and review during the next triennium. The council said that "the exposure of the church to the broader range of scriptural imagery and metaphor has helped move the church forward in the search for alternative texts that are faithful to a fuller expression of the nature of God and the diversity of God's people."

## **Date set for prayer day for persons living with HIV/AIDS**

The presiding bishop's sixth National Day of Prayer for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS has been set for Sunday, October 13. A new poster and resource materials for this year's observance are being readied for mailing.

## **Australian archbishop asks, What 'new world order'?**

The Anglican archbishop of Sydney, Australia, Donald Robinson, has openly questioned the presumed advent of a new world order. In his Easter message, Robinson pointed out that while "thousands of Kuwaitis and Iraqis are struggling to rebuild their lives," most people in the industrialized nations remain focused on their day-to-day concerns. He compared the majority of Australians whose lifestyles are merely hedged by the economic downswing to the "millions of Ethiopians and Sudanese [who] struggle to see another day."

## **Bishop Harris: Women should seek roots of oppression**

Bishop Barbara Harris, the first woman bishop in the Anglican Communion, warned women against the danger of attaining decision-making positions in the church for the sake of power rather than service. Harris, suffragan bishop of Massachusetts, urged women's groups to search for the root causes of poverty, racism, and sexism within prevailing power structures. "If all you do is buy into a corrupt structure and oppress people the same way the institution has always oppressed people, I don't call that leadership," Harris told a Brown University audience on April 17. She called for a strategy that empowers the needy rather than one that merely addresses the symptoms of their need.



## **EMM conference examines 'hospitality to the stranger'**

Over 80 participants gathered for the annual Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) Network Conference, recently held in Nashville, Tennessee, under the banner "Inner Worlds' Outer Worlds: Spirituality and Action in the 1990s." More than 40 dioceses involved in refugee resettlement and ministries to immigrants and those seeking asylum in the United States were represented. The keynote speaker, the Rev. Helen Hunter of the Diocese of Melbourne, Australia, offered the Australian experience of pluralism as a model for those designing church programs and services. Hunter examined the unique challenge facing Australia in welcoming immigrants to a country where over 200 languages and dialects are spoken.

## **Major papal encyclical on economic and social issues**

Pope John Paul II issued "Centesimus Annus" ("The Hundredth Year"), a major encyclical that addresses the need for a moral dimension to the market economy taking shape in the wake of communism's collapse. While affirming that the free market "is the most efficient instrument for utilizing resources and effectively responding to needs," the encyclical cautioned against espousing profits and the "superficial gratification" of consumerism at the cost of the "many human needs that find no place on the market." The pope recommended the Roman Catholic Church's social teaching as a counterbalance to tendencies that, he said, foster poverty and an unconcern for human development. John Paul II also touched upon the need to find nonviolent alternatives for resolving international conflicts, but did not abandon the church's position on the possibility of just wars. The document marked the one-hundredth anniversary of "Rerum Novarum," an encyclical of Pope Leo XIII that, among other things, offered the church's qualified support of the labor movement. While encyclicals are major papal decrees on theology and policy, the extent of their acceptance among Roman Catholics has varied.

## **Guatemala talks viewed as 'highly positive'**

Religious leaders in Guatemala responded with optimism to talks between the government and guerrilla leaders that sought to end that country's 30-year-old civil war. Monsignor Rodolfo Quezada Toruno, the Roman Catholic bishop of Zacapa and head of the commission mediating the negotiations, said the three-day talks were "highly positive." The talks were held in Mexico City in late April, and a second round of negotiations is slated for some time in May. A number of issues remain unresolved, including revision of the constitution, demilitarization and the role of the army, protection of indigenous people, land reform, and a fuller implementation of democratic structures.



Both Protestant and Roman Catholic leaders have urged rebel forces to agree to an immediate cease-fire. "If the guerrillas hope to see social conditions improved considerably before they reach a cease-fire, ...many more people will be killed," said Edmundo Madrid, who heads an alliance of Protestant churches in Guatemala. Unofficial estimates place the number of civil war dead at 100,000. Tens of thousands of additional Guatemalans have fled to Mexico to escape the protracted conflict.

### **Survey compares clergy's adherence to moral standards**

Roman Catholic priests are more likely to violate the moral codes of their faith than are their Protestant counterparts, according to a recent survey by the *Star Tribune* in Minneapolis. The poll, published April 21-23, measured responses from 1,405 clergy in Minnesota, a state where Lutherans number 36.7 percent of the population and Roman Catholics, 18.5 percent. The survey found that one in five Roman Catholic priests had violated their celibacy vows. Among mainline Protestant ministers, 15 percent said they had been involved in extramarital relationships, three times the rate reported for ministers from evangelical and fundamentalist denominations. In terms of sexual preference, 13 percent of Roman Catholic priests said they were either homosexual or bisexual, compared with 4 percent of mainline Protestant clergy and 2 percent of evangelical and fundamentalist clergy. In the area of job satisfaction, almost 75 percent of Roman Catholic priests indicated that they were happy in their calling, in contrast to 66 percent of evangelical and fundamentalist ministers and 53 percent of mainline Protestant clergy.

### **Cardinal Mindszenty's remains are reburied in Hungary**

The remains of the late Cardinal Jozsef Mindszenty--the Roman Catholic prelate who steadfastly opposed Hungry's Communist regime--were transported to his native Hungry for reburial on May 4, thereby marking the continuing democratization of that country. Mindszenty had lived for 15 years in the U.S. legation in Budapest, where he took asylum during the aborted 1956 revolution after being freed from prison by anti-Stalinist forces. He had been imprisoned for life by the communists in 1949 for his defense of the church's rights and property. Under a 1971 agreement between the Vatican and the Communist regime, Mindszenty was allowed safe passage from Hungry. He died in Vienna in 1975, at the age of 83, having stipulated that his remains be returned to Hungary only after "the star of the faithless Moscow falls." The Communist party was defeated last year in Hungary's democratic elections.



### **Israeli parliament honors fundamentalist Christian group**

The Israeli parliament recently presented its Speakers Award to the International Christian Embassy (I.C.E.), a Jerusalem-based fundamentalist organization that has promoted Israel as a democratic, tolerant, peace-loving country. It marked the first time the award was issued to a Christian institution. Johann Luckhoff, director of the fundamentalist group, said the \$7,500 prize money would enable I.C.E. to step up its campaign to transport Soviet Jews to Israel "and also to raise more support for Israel all over the world." The "embassy" was set up in 1980 in the wake of the international furor sparked by Israel's formal annexation of the eastern sector of Jerusalem, seized from Jordan in the 1967 war. Jerusalem had been set aside as an international zone under the 1947 United Nations resolution that partitioned Palestine.

### **Polish RC bishops urge church-state alliance**

Roman Catholic bishops in Poland have called for an end to constitutional guarantees separating church and state, a move that, if enacted, would virtually establish Roman Catholicism as Poland's state religion. The bishops' proposal, issued April 25, decried the "mistaken and harmful oversimplification...that presents the lay character of the state as a fundamental and practically sole guarantee of freedom and equality of all citizens." The measure faces little likelihood of passage in the present parliament, informed observers said, but the election of a new parliament in the fall could alter the balance in favor of the bishops' proposal. President Lech Walesa, the former Solidarity trade union leader, has backed the church's initiative, while the Center Alliance party, comprised mainly of Solidarity members, strongly favors retaining the separation of church and state. Recent surveys have shown that the Polish Roman Catholic Church, once viewed by Poles as the nation's most trusted institution, is now second to the army in that category. The church's support of strict abortion legislation and its efforts to reintroduce religious education into public schools are widely considered key factors in the church's decline. Although over 90 percent of Poles identify themselves as Roman Catholic, surveys indicate that about 60 percent of Poland's citizens oppose the church's anti-abortion efforts.

### **Good Friday upheld as legal holiday in Hawaii**

Hawaii's observance of Good Friday as a holiday for state employees was recently upheld by a federal appeals court. Although 11 other states recognize Good Friday as a legal holiday, the decision marked the first time a federal appellate court has ruled on the issue. In setting forth the majority



opinion in the 2-1 decision, Judges Diarmuid O'Scannlain and Stephen Trott dismissed the contention that the ruling favored one religion over another, calling the holiday "a minimal accommodation of the religious practices of some Hawaiians." Both O'Scannlain and Trott were appointed during the Reagan administration.

### Pope appoints six bishops in the Soviet Union

Pope John Paul II announced the appointment of six bishops in the Soviet Union, including the first Roman Catholic bishop of Moscow since the 1930s. The appointments, made public April 13, have been widely interpreted as signaling the Vatican's expectation that religious openness will continue in the Soviet Union despite that country's prevailing internal disturbances. An analyst at Keston College, a British-based foundation that examines religion under communism, said that the Vatican "will regard the presence of a bishop in the Soviet capital as part of the normalization of relations between the Vatican and the Soviet government."

### UCC calls for freeze on weapons shipments to Mideast

The United Church of Christ (UCC) urged congressional leaders to suspend U.S. weapons deliveries to the Middle East as a first step toward establishing a United Nations-led multinational embargo on arms transfers to the region. In its April 24 statement, the UCC's Office for Church in Society also called for an end to Israeli settlements in occupied Arab territories, and a homeland for Palestinians in the context of Israel's security.

### Lutherans and Episcopalians join in historic service

Members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA) and the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona joined in a historic Eucharist in Phoenix recently. Episcopal Bishop Joseph Heistand celebrated the service, and ELCA Bishop Howard Wennes preached. "I'm delighted at long last that we are able to break bread," Wennes said in calling attention to efforts by the two denominations to enter full communion. The proposal has met some resistance, especially among Lutherans. During a discussion of the proposal for full communion released in January, the Rev. Jan Flaaten of Trinity Lutheran Church in Phoenix said, "Ecumenical dialogue is not horse trading; it's all of us trying to find that place where we can come together." Lutherans and Episcopalians in Arizona already share a congregation. "It just shows if you leave it to us common folks we could work it out," Heistand said.



### **Trinity dedicates new commons building**

A new commons building at Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, is being described as a sign of God's blessing on the school's ministry. "It shows we are here to stay," said the Rev. Bruce Newell, dean for external ministries. "We depend upon the Lord speaking through his people, and he through them has supplied not just the budget but this new building as well." Trinity, located in an area northwest of Pittsburgh still suffering effects of the collapse of the steel industry, depends on gifts for over 85 percent of its operating budget.

### **Church leaders urge support for 1991 Civil Rights Act**

Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning of the Episcopal Church has joined 16 other church leaders urging support for the Civil Rights Act of 1991. In a letter to all members of the U.S. House of Representatives, the church leaders said, "We believe justice demands that discriminatory barriers to employment and advancement on the job must not be allowed to prevent working people in this country from achieving their maximum potential in the workplace." The letter argued that the bill would "overturn several regressive Supreme Court rulings that have made it easier for employers to discriminate against and harass workers on the job." Browning represented the religious community when the bill was first introduced last year. The bill was subsequently vetoed by President George Bush and the attempt to override the veto narrowly failed.

### **Episcopal Church leaders urge pressure for Mideast peace**

Returning from a Holy Week pilgrimage to the Middle East, four Episcopal Church leaders urged continued pressure for a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Presiding Bishop and Mrs. Edmond Browning, the Rev. Patrick Mauney, the church's deputy for Anglican affairs, and Dr. Betty Coats of the church's Washington office said the Bush administration should be "thanked for taking quick initiative following the Gulf War to refocus on an Israeli-Palestinian peace process." In calling on Episcopalians to demonstrate their support for such a process by contacting the president and Secretary of State James Baker, the four said they were told by those they visited in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank that the settlements are an obstacle to peace and that Palestinians continue to suffer discrimination and harassment from Israeli authorities.

### **Best sermons selected in national preaching competition**

Five Episcopal priests were honored for the excellence of their sermons in the Best Sermon Competition, sponsored by the Episcopal Evangelism



Foundation. The winners were chosen from five sermon categories: biblical (category)--the Rev. Charles B. Fulghum of St. Martin in the Fields Church in Atlanta, Georgia; theological--the Rev. Jane Sigloh of St. Matthew's Church in Wilton, Connecticut; social issue--the Very Rev. Van H. Gardner of the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Baltimore; moral--the Rev. Weaver Stevens of St. Michael and All Angels Church in Studio City, California; and pastoral--the Rev. Stephen M. Hall of St. Mark's Church in Fort Dodge, Iowa. Hall's sermon was judged the overall winner of the competition. Cash prizes were awarded to both the winners and their parishes. The Hartford, Connecticut-based foundation will publish the winning and runner-up sermons of each category later this year. A donation by John C. Whitehead of New York City made the competition possible.

### **New information number for PB's relief fund**

The Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief now has a 24-hour, toll-free information number: 1-800-488-0087. A range of information--accessible through push-button options--is available, including specific fund efforts in various parts of the world, donation procedures, and grant application details.

### **Conference spotlights preaching skills for seminarians**

Forty-three Episcopal seminary students will gather in Berkeley, California, on June 1 for a week-long conference aimed at honing their preaching skills. The fourth annual Preaching Excellence Conference is sponsored by the Episcopal Evangelism Foundation, and will be held at the Church Divinity School. Participating students were selected on the basis of recommendations made by the deans of the 11 accredited Episcopal seminaries in the United States. The conference's teaching staff will consist of five professors of preaching and five parish clergy, and featured lectures or sermons will be given by the Rt. Rev. William Swing, bishop of California; Dr. Robert Bellah, an author and professor of sociology; and the Very Rev. Alan Jones and the Rev. Michael Merriman, both of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco. The Episcopal Evangelism Foundation, founded 12 years ago, seeks to provide supplemental theological education to persons preparing for the Episcopal Church's ordained ministry. For further conference information, contact the Rev. Roger Alling, Diocese of Connecticut, 1335 Asylum Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105; telephone (203) 233-4481.



## PEOPLE

**The Rev. Ian T. Douglas and the Rev. Dr. Romney Moseley** were recently appointed to posts at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Douglas will become director of the school's Anglicanism, Globalism, and Ecumenism (AGE) program, and Moseley will join the divinity school as associate professor of pastoral theology and contemporary church ministries. Douglas has been associated with AGE since the program's inception in 1988. Currently a doctoral candidate in religious and theological studies at Boston University, he previously served in a variety of Episcopal Church positions, including as a Volunteer for Mission in Haiti. Moseley, a native of Barbados, West Indies, was most recently an associate professor of divinity at Trinity College, University of Toronto. He received a bachelor of divinity degree from the Harvard Divinity School in 1971 and a doctorate from Harvard University in 1979.





# news features

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*Issues facing the 70th General Convention in Phoenix*

## General Convention is one of the largest, most complicated governing bodies in the world

by James H. Thrall

It's "overwhelming, puzzling, and frustrating," especially for someone attending for the first time. Yet, with a bit of familiarity, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church becomes "like a homecoming," said the Very Rev. David B. Collins, president of the convention's House of Deputies. "It really is a gathering of the clan," he said.

The 70th General Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, July 11-20, will be the second and last time Collins serves as president, the person who directs the legislative activity of the 900-member House of Deputies.

Together, the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops make up the bicameral government of the Episcopal Church. The similarities to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States are no surprise. Many of the nation's founders were involved in designing both.

Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning serves as Collins's counterpart, the president of the House of Bishops. Assisting them are the Rt. Rev. James Ottley, bishop of Panama and the vice president of the House of Bishops, and Pamela Chinnis, vice president of the House of Deputies.

### General Convention: government on a grand scale

What is overwhelming about General Convention is its sheer size. With more than 1,100 bishops and deputies in the two houses, the Episcopal Church



is one of the largest legislative bodies in the world. It is probably not the largest, however, as is sometimes claimed, said the Rev. Donald A. Nickerson, executive officer of General Convention and secretary of the House of Deputies.

"I have heard the legislature in New Hampshire is larger, and possibly the government of India," Nickerson said. "I don't know for sure."

The massive size is a product of time and expansion. Representation to the House of Deputies was set originally at four clergy and four lay deputies for each diocese, and has never changed, according to Nickerson. As the Episcopal Church grew with the country, and "as mission activity took us into different parts of the world, the number of dioceses increased," he said.

Add the triennial national meeting of the Episcopal Church Women, which traditionally meets in conjunction with the General Convention--as well as staff, exhibitors, alternate deputies, family members, and others, and "we will process about 10,000 people who pass through the convention for some reason or other," Nickerson said. "Some are there only for a day; others might be there for two weeks."

Perennially, the cost and awkwardness of doing business en masse prompted resolutions to reduce the number of representatives per diocese. So far, however, deputies have opted for the broader democracy of their traditional numbers.

While the standard proposal is to reduce the delegations to three lay and three clergy deputies, the allure of being a deputy helps defeat it each time, Collins said. "Very few deputies want to vote in favor, knowing that next time they could be number four," he said. There also is concern that smaller delegations would tend to reduce the number of minority voices that can be heard, he noted.

The size does limit the cities able to host General Convention. "When we go into a city, we have to find 2,500 rooms that they can commit to us for a two-week period," Nickerson said.

### **Resolutions, resolutions, resolutions**

The exhausting numbers aren't limited to people. In the 10 days of the convention, participants will consider, amend, debate, revise, reject, throw out, approve, defeat, or in some other way deal with over 500 resolutions.

By the end of April, the General Convention office had received 370 resolutions, and they will continue to come in until the close of business on the second legislative day of the convention, Nickerson said. "Hopefully every resolution will have its day." At the convention in Detroit in 1988, only about 64 were not acted on, he observed. When that happens, they are referred to



an interim committee to handle.

Resolutions come in four flavors: A, B, C, and D.

"A" resolutions are proposed by the national committees, commissions, boards, and organizations of the Episcopal Church.

"B" resolutions are proposed by bishops.

"C" resolutions are proposed by dioceses, and for the first time this year, by provinces.

"D" resolutions are proposed by deputies.

To keep track of the paperwork, each resolution is numbered according to its type and the order in which it was received, Nickerson explained, starting with B-1, C-1, and D-1. The exception is "A" resolutions, which are alphabetized.

The first stop for a resolution is one of the 27 legislative committees of either the House of Bishops or the House of Deputies.

"Issues of liturgy or ministry tend to go first to the House of Bishops," Nickerson said. "Issues of national or international affairs, social or urban issues, or program and budget tend to go first to the House of Deputies."

Before convention begins, those decisions are made by the presidents of the two houses. At convention, Nickerson is mostly responsible for trafficking.

While the committee of one house receives a resolution for "action," its sister or "cognate" committee of the other house receives it at the same time for its "information." Often, the two committees meet together so that both are aware of how a resolution is faring.

When a resolution is reported out from the committee to its house, it usually comes with a recommendation for action. The deputies or bishops, however, "debate and vote on the resolution, not on the committee report," Nickerson said.

If approved by one house, the resolution is sent to the other house for "concurrence." If the second house votes to concur with the resolution as approved by the first house, the resolution has passed and becomes official. If the second house amends the resolution, however, it goes back to the first house, which must decide whether the amendment is acceptable.

### **When the church is a legislature**

With legislative business to accomplish, forms of legislative order to observe, and differences of opinion to debate, the "government" aspect of General Convention easily can overshadow the "church" aspect, Collins said, but that doesn't have to happen.

"You eventually make one of two choices as to how to proceed," Collins



said. "You can talk about all those other people in error who need to be defeated, which creates a situation of 'us' and 'them,' of competition. Or you can be as concerned about their place in the church as for your allies."

Perhaps the worst indictment of convention, Collins said, was the comment, "You all are worse than the Democratic National Convention. It's as though all you care about are special interest groups, and you don't care at all about the church as a whole."

The business of convention is to make decisions, and "it does have to be yes or no," Collins said. "And yet, it can be 'yes' in a way that honors those who felt compelled to say 'no.'"

Recognizing a common base is critical, Collins said. "It's only with the common base that you can have diversity. Otherwise, you just are a bunch of splinter groups."

As he appoints members of committees, he tries to follow that same principle, Collins said. "You try to get the best balance you can so they represent the whole church. But it isn't just to get a compromise, and even less to get a majority. If you want to win (on a particular issue), you just have to have 51 percent. Then you don't have to care about the other 49 percent. The committee works if we care about the whole 100 percent."

Seniority is a main criteria in choosing committee members for the House of Deputies. "If you have attended three or more conventions, you are almost automatically on a committee," said Nickerson. Deputies who provide a needed element to balance a committee, however, stand a better chance of an earlier appointment.

"There are not that many ordained women, for example," Nickerson said. "Chances are good that they will be on a committee." Whether on committees or not, deputies have at least two roles to balance, Collins said--listeners and leaders. "Good deputies will listen to what their dioceses are saying, listen carefully," he continued. "If they aren't going to speak for their diocese, who is?"

At the same time, if there isn't any on-the-spot responsiveness to the direction of convention and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, deputies "might as well mail their votes and stay home," Collins said.

### **In Phoenix, worship will help balance debate**

Legislation is only one of three purposes for convention. Worship and the building of community will both be "lifted up in a way that hasn't happened before," said the Rev. Charles Cesaretti, project manager and coordinator of General Convention.

In the past, there have been regular worship opportunities, but only two



services designed to involve the entire convention--the opening service and a service focused on the United Thank Offering of the Episcopal Church Women, Cesaretti said.

The opening service especially "began to bear the entire worship life of convention," Cesaretti said. This time, there will be three major services, with the opening service serving as a tribute to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. A special "pastoral triptych" incorporating music, Scripture, and the voice of King has been prepared by J. Owen Burdick, organist and choir director at Trinity Parish in New York.

Given the controversy that has swirled around Arizona's rejection of a Martin Luther King holiday, and the decision to hold General Convention in Phoenix, the service will make an important statement about the Episcopal Church's presence, Cesaretti said. It provides a way from the very outset to address the issue of racism in a positive way while allowing King to be honored as a person who is "not just a social activist, but a theologian and prophet," he said.

The second service, midway through convention, will focus on the spiritual contribution and understanding of the land of Native American Episcopalians. The third, toward the end, will include a reaffirmation of baptismal vows and will feature former Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie as preacher.

Probably of more importance to the tone of convention will be the 10 daily Eucharists scheduled between the early morning legislative committee meetings and the full sessions of the houses, Cesaretti said. In these services, assigned groups drawn from around the country will meet at 300 tables of 10 people each surrounding a central altar.

After an initial period of "music, praise, and preparation," and before the Eucharist, the groups will spend time in Bible sharing, which will give each person "a chance to enter into dialogue with other persons at the convention, but more important, enable convention to enter into dialogue with Scripture," Cesaretti said.

The emphasis will be on Bible sharing, rather than Bible study, Collins noted. "If you have Bible study, it will be taken over by the clergy," he said. "The question we will be asking is, 'How is the Lord going to speak to us through this Scripture?' The newest layman is as much an expert at answering that as the oldest bishop--perhaps better."

"The worship is going to play a significant part because it brings the convention into dialogue with the Word, the Word as it's found in Scripture, the Word as its found in the bread and wine," Cesaretti said. "We'll be attempting to be who we are, a worshiping, faithful community."



### **Convention in a simpler form**

While each convention has its own flavor, largely affected by location, the controversy around the Phoenix site has made that doubly true this time. To help focus the convention on the principles upheld by Martin Luther King, Jr., "we're trying for a simpler lifestyle" throughout the convention, Collins said. "Actually that has been a goal for some time," he said.

"The presiding bishop has called Phoenix God's gift to us to give us a chance to look at this in a way that wouldn't have happened if we were in Oshkosh," Collins said. "We have always presented resolutions saying we want a simpler, less expensive convention. Okay, now we are doing something about it." He added, "My hope is that we don't do this at Phoenix and then go back to what it was before."

Exhibitors are being asked to reduce the size of their exhibits, with an emphasis on educational material rather than commercialism, Nickerson said. Many of the peripheral receptions and parties have been eliminated or toned down. Common lunches available on eight of the days will help curb some of the meal expense, while continuing the community building started with the daily services.

Hotels serving the convention have been asked to remove all amenities usually placed in their rooms, such as shampoo, conditioner, and other toilet articles except for soap, so that the money saved can be donated to the Diocese of Arizona to support shelter programs throughout the diocese.

Bins will be located throughout the convention site to recycle paper, newspaper, and aluminum cans.

In addition, a "racism audit," in the form of a questionnaire filled out early in the convention, will help focus attention on the issues of individual and institutional racism raised by King, Nickerson said. A new Martin Luther King, Jr., Legacy Fund to provide scholarships for minority college students will be supported in a variety of ways, including by offerings at Convention worship services.

--James H. Thrall is communications officer of the Diocese of Connecticut.



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*Issues facing the 70th General Convention in Phoenix*

## Is the Episcopal Church on the road to racial justice?

by Michael Barwell

- Rioters set buses, cars, and buildings afire, 50 are injured, as ghetto residents rampage against police in Washington, D.C. Tensions mount in one of America's most racially charged cities.
- Television viewers sit transfixed as they watch a videotape of Los Angeles police mercilessly beating a black man in the street. Some blacks now say they fear for their safety and confide they would flee before being stopped by a police officer for any reason.
- In the Midwest, a Native American woman, wife of a prominent citizen, is harshly treated merely as "another drunk Indian" when she falls in an icy parking lot, breaking an arm and shoulder. Ignored by passersby, she waits an agonizing 45 minutes in subfreezing weather for an ambulance ride to a local hospital.

Isolated incidents? Hardly. They are more like a litany of examples of racial tension, which continues to strain the fabric of American society. Issues of racial justice continue to knock on the doors of American churches.

When the Episcopal Church gathers in Phoenix, Arizona, in July, the realities of racial justice will be on the daily agenda for every deputy. During "community lunches" and special events, deputies will have an opportunity to focus on the church's role in justice issues through Bible study, prayer, and discussion. What they say and hear may not always be pleasant.

Many of those deputies vividly remember the halcyon days of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, when bishops, priests, and laity--black and white--marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and other leaders, shaking the conscience of a nation and demanding racial equality. Many worked hard, registering voters, protesting, some even spending a night in jail for a cause they believed was just.

And there were changes. Benefits resulting from the Civil Rights Act, Great Society programs, affirmative action, and a growing black middle class



are visible signs that some things have changed. But racism, often subtle, remains in the workplace, on college campuses, and in the churches. It is still deeply embedded in American culture.

Now, 30 years later, both African Americans and many whites are wondering how much has truly changed. Is racial justice still an elusive goal? How will the church respond?

### **A polarizing issue**

The decision to hold the General Convention in Phoenix threatened to polarize the church last fall after Arizona voters defeated two ballot proposals to declare Martin Luther King's birthday a paid state holiday. Many in the church immediately called for pulling out of Phoenix, and advocated moving the convention to another city that celebrates the holiday. The Episcopal Church in Arizona, which had long championed the holiday, felt battered, almost abandoned by the larger church.

Throughout the fall and early winter, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and other leaders listened--but finally urged the church to rally around the Diocese of Arizona and Navajoland, cohosts of the convention. Browning said that the church had a rare opportunity to witness to the power of the Gospel in Arizona, which a boycott would never accomplish.

That witness has already begun. In January, Browning, Bishop Herbert Thompson, Jr., of Southern Ohio, Bishop James Ottley of Panama, and other church leaders went to Phoenix to show solidarity with the black community and the Episcopal Church in Arizona. Meeting with community and state leaders, they also marched with 25,000 people to call for a King holiday. Arizona's newly elected governor, Jay Symington, an Episcopalian, has vowed to push for the holiday.

At the same time, the church's Executive Council and convention planning groups modified the convention's format to address racial concerns and advocate a simpler lifestyle for church members. All delegates to the convention will participate in a racism audit to measure the attitudes of members of the church. The council also established a Martin Luther King, Jr., endowment to provide scholarships to blacks and Native Americans.

Meanwhile, the black community split over the decision to hold the convention in Phoenix. Some dioceses, and the Episcopal Divinity School, passed resolutions calling for a total boycott.

Thompson, the only black to serve on the General Convention Site Selection Committee in 1987 that chose Phoenix, called instead for the church to go to Phoenix to witness to Christ in the midst of racism. "To walk away would be to abandon the black community and Episcopalians who have worked



so hard to honor Dr. King," Thompson said.

Thompson took some heat for his stand. However, he said, "Things are changing. Some of the black leadership in the church now sees this as an opportunity to deal with the issues of racism as we have never dealt with them before."

### **Deep pain, long memories**

Others are not so sure. The Rev. James Hunter II is one who disagrees with the decision to hold the convention in Phoenix.

Hunter's father was lynched in Virginia when he was 12. He vowed to seek justice, since the local police wouldn't help track down his father's killers. But by the time he finished high school, Hunter realized he was fighting a battle he could never win. So he immersed himself in the civil rights movement in the late 1960s, registering voters, marching, trying to fight racism through the system. After graduating from seminary, he spent the summer of 1967 working with street gangs in Chicago.

But 24 years later, Hunter admitted to a sense of burnout and bluntly said that many things haven't changed. Blacks may sit anywhere on a bus, but they continue to face high unemployment, job discrimination, economic disparity, and poor education. He left the civil rights movement years ago. Boldly, he said, "Lynchings happen in different ways"--but they still happen. Racism, he warned, is still pandemic in society and the church.

Hunter has been rector of St. Jude's Church in North Pole, Alaska, for six years--one of only a handful of black priests serving mostly white congregations in the Episcopal Church. It's a small parish, having only 60 members, and is a far cry from the Virginia of his youth. Married to a white woman, Hunter encounters racism daily. It is a heavy burden, and he exhibits a deep mistrust--even of the black leadership of the church.

Hunter is not going to Phoenix. "It's a sell-out," he said. By deciding to hold the General Convention in Phoenix, Hunter believes, the church is missing a singular opportunity to visibly protest racism in society. And he discounts plans for focusing on racism at General Convention, saying that the time for sharing stories is over.

Hunter said that deputies need a reality check. His suggestion: have black deputies dress in shabby clothing, "then go into the jewelry stores of the Scottsdale Country Club" and experience racism firsthand. "They'll quickly discover nothing has changed," Hunter charged.

### **'Survivors of genocide'**

Few are more sensitive to racism than Native Americans. As cohosts of



the Phoenix convention, the people of Navajoland will have unprecedented opportunity to share a culture and heritage that "has survived 500 years of genocide relatively intact," said Owanah Anderson, national staff officer for Native American Ministries in the Episcopal Church.

"Remember that Native American slaves were the first exports from the New World," Anderson said during a recent interview. In the following centuries Native Americans were "victims of genocide, disease, and displacement," and "part of the genocide was the forced removal from their homes to reservations."

"Slaughter was part of the manifest destiny of European settlers," Anderson said, until by 1990, there were fewer than 280,000 Native Americans in the United States.

Anderson said that Native Americans "are a forgotten people. One of the greatest difficulties for the non-Indian mind is trying to relate to us as contemporary beings. Sure we're in the history books--but, hey, we're still here!"

The difference between Native Americans and other minorities, Anderson said, "is that we want to be left culturally intact. The civil rights activists wanted the barriers broken so that minorities could get inside. We've been demanding to be Indian--and to be left alone. It isn't our style to storm the barriers. We want to survive in our own ways."

Their "own ways" will be shared by the Native American community during a two-hour ceremonial at General Convention, featuring song, story, and commentaries and focusing on "the major gifts Native American people have to offer the church--faith and joy," according to the Rev. Mark MacDonald of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Ft. Defiance, Arizona, a Navajo parish.

Native American ministry groups are moving ahead with significant plans for educational and other consciousness-raising efforts as the 500th anniversary of Columbus's "discovery" of the New World approaches in 1992.

The anniversary is a sore point with Native Americans, and a grim humor pervades planning discussions as they perceive the European-dominated world celebrating "three little ships" that brought a half a millennium of disease, displacement, enslavement, and death to a rich culture of "home, place, and earth."

Anderson pointed to the Episcopal Church's long commitment to Native American ministries, dating back to the first English settlement at Jamestown. She grinned as she cited "the great command of King James (of England) to preach the Gospel to the savages along the shore."

"When we speak of racism in the church, it is always a black-white



issue. What about us?" asked Anderson.

### **Hispanics also 'invisible'**

The same question could be asked about ministries to Hispanics, Asian Americans, and other minorities emerging as strong faith communities in a church dominated by white, middle-class Anglo-Americans. How does a church based in a European heritage adapt to new opportunities in a multifaceted culture?

"When we talk about racism, most of the time the issue is about blacks and whites," said the Rev. Canon Herbert Arrunategui, national Hispanic officer for the Episcopal Church. "And when the Episcopal Church develops programs for minorities, it is talking about blacks. When we talk about economic justice, homelessness, and so forth, in people's minds are black Americans. Hispanics are an invisible people in the church. I don't think, generally speaking, that the Episcopal Church is dealing with the opportunity that the Hispanic community presents," Arrunategui said.

"The Episcopal Church reacts to crisis," Arrunategui continued. "It will take some national crisis before the church will pay attention to Hispanics," he said.

"Even the name *Hispanic* is a racist term," Arrunategui said, because it is used as an umbrella term for millions of people of different color, culture, and ethnic backgrounds. Dealing in stereotypes is most damaging. Hispanics, he said, "are not perceived as leaders or contributors to the life of the church. We are seen as being incapable of handling our own destiny. The Episcopal Church should affirm and accept the diversity and unusual makeup of the church, instead of trying to squeeze us into an Anglo mold."

Arrunategui also said that tensions between blacks and Hispanics "are based more on economics than race. How the pie is divided, how the resources are used" can be a visible sign of racism at work in a community.

"There is an awful lot of racism--and racism is more than black and white"; it can come in many forms, Arrunategui said, adding that "at least blacks have the advantage of language in common with the white community."

Can the church find a common mind to change itself and society by responding to racial and economic injustice? Can the church become or remain sensitive to the pressing needs and longings of people in a diverse culture seeking their "piece of the pie"?

--Michael Barwell is director of communication for the Diocese of Southern Ohio.



91123

*Issues facing the General Convention in Phoenix*

## **Simmering debate on homosexuality may boil over in Phoenix**

by Steve Weston

Like the high-pitched whistle of a boiling teapot, sounds of discord over sexuality are galvanizing the attention of the Episcopal Church on the eve of its 70th General Convention in Phoenix.

At the center is a simmering controversy that has embroiled most mainline American denominations for the past two decades and is now on the front burner for Episcopalians: the church's policy toward its gay and lesbian members.

Delegates to the bicameral legislative convention will join an already emotional debate on the issue of sexuality among those who believe that the church's credibility--either as inclusive community, or as teacher of traditional sexual ethics--is at stake.

For Episcopalians the debate on homosexuality has centered primarily on the question of the fitness of gay and lesbian candidates to be ordained to the ministry. On the table for discussion in Phoenix will be at least two proposals to set the terms for future discussion of homosexuality in the church. Both proposals appeal to some elements of the status quo, yet each would significantly move the church in a new direction.

One proposal would leave the question of qualifications of all candidates for the ministry--including homosexuals--in the hands of the local bishop and diocesan commissions that shepherd the ordination process. The other proposal would effectively prohibit the ordination of noncelibate homosexual candidates by affirming the church's traditional language about sexual morality in the form of a canon, or church law.

Yet, whether the convention chooses to adopt one or the other proposal--or neither--the tenor of the debate on the issue of homosexuality in Phoenix may have a lasting impact on all future discussion. According to one traditionalist bishop, the decisions on ordaining homosexuals "may well be the closest thing to a make-or-break issue for the church--far more than any other issue." And some observers have described the controversy as "the most divisive issue facing American churches since slavery."



### Prior conventions set precedent

The current debate over the church's policy toward gay and lesbian members began in 1976, when a General Convention resolution acknowledged "that homosexual persons are children of God and have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the church." Yet, a 1977 statement from the Committee on Theology in the House of Bishops said that it was "crucial to distinguish between an advocating and/or practicing--willful and habitual--homosexual and one with a dominant homosexual orientation only." The bishops also adopted a statement that declared ordination was inadmissible for an avowed homosexual.

The 1979 General Convention followed the lead of the bishops with a benchmark resolution that affirmed traditional teachings of the church on marriage, marital fidelity, and sexual chastity as standards for Christian sexual morality and declared that it was "not appropriate" to ordain a practicing homosexual. However, 44 bishops subsequently signed a public statement of dissent from the resolution declaring that they would not be bound by the resolution as a matter of conscience.

It was not until the 1985 General Convention in Anaheim than an attempt was made to reexamine the question of ordaining gay and lesbian candidates. A change designed to eliminate sexual orientation as a criteria for "rights and status in the church" was approved by each house in slightly different language, but failed to become canon law because of a case of miscommunication between the two houses. A similar change designed to eliminate sexual orientation as a criteria for access to the ordination process was adopted by the House of Bishops but not by the House of Deputies. The convention did urge dioceses to "foster a better understanding of homosexual persons, to dispel myths and prejudices about homosexuality, to provide pastoral support, and to give life to the claim of homosexual persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral care and concern of the church."

At the 1988 General Convention in Detroit, the House of Deputies narrowly defeated a resolution eliminating sexual orientation as criteria for ordination. Instead, biblical and traditional teachings on chastity and fidelity in personal relationships were upheld, with exemplary standards of sexual morality accepted as normative. Open dialogue on the subject was urged in each diocese, with members of the gay and lesbian communities participating. The convention directed the church's Standing Commission on Human Affairs, headed by Bishop George Hunt of Rhode Island, to study the question of human sexuality and report to the 1991 General Convention in Phoenix.



### **Spong ordination fuels heated reaction**

The ordination of an avowed, noncelibate homosexual to the priesthood in December 1989 by Bishop John Spong of Newark (New Jersey) sharpened the questions regarding the ordination of gay and lesbian candidates. The ordination fueled heated reaction throughout the church and initiated attempts by some to bring charges against Spong for violating the spirit of the 1979 resolution. Although the 1990 meeting of the House of Bishops narrowly voted to "disassociate" from Spong's ordination of the gay priest, the question regarding the binding authority of the 1979 resolution was a major bone of contention.

At the conclusion of the 1990 meeting, the bishops adopted a "Statement on Homosexuality" that called for continued dialogue on the issue, noting that "no matter how deeply each of us may feel about homosexuality, there are other people of good faith who also take seriously the authority of Scripture and may conclude differently." The bishops urged the church to approach the continuing dialogue with patience, warning that "this may be especially difficult for those who expect early resolution, an up-or-down vote at the forthcoming General Convention."

### **Reluctant to engage in open dialogue**

Meantime, the Standing Commission on Human Affairs, also known in church circles as the Hunt Commission, continued to work on a report for the Phoenix meeting. The commission noted that only 28 of the 99 dioceses in the United States had submitted responses to its request for open discussion of human sexuality. Registering disappointment, the commission said that over half the dioceses "had not taken seriously the recommendations of General Convention" and appeared reluctant to engage in open dialogue.

While there was no consensus in diocesan responses received by the Hunt Commission, many did insist that, in the report's words, "the Episcopal Church needs to educate its members on sexual issues and exert leadership in this area."

The Rev. Anne Fowler, rector of All Saints' Church in Stoneham, Massachusetts, and cochair of the diocesan commission on human sexuality, said that the experience in more than 30 parishes in her diocese was a model she would like to see repeated throughout the church. "What we tried to do was unravel the roots of homophobia," Fowler continued. "We've had quite a uniform success, staying with it, talking with each other, fostering the feeling of openness."

"If other dioceses engaged the issue," Fowler said, "and if bishops were supportive and directive, we would find the basis for understanding. People



aren't converted by reading books, but by incarnational experience."

One of the pressing questions faced by the 11 Hunt Commission members was how the church could maintain its commitment to diversity and try to come to some resolution on sexuality issues. Members of the commission cited the prejudice to which homosexuals are regularly subjected, calling upon the church to affirm them, to "acknowledge their presence, to repent of its exclusion of them from full participation," and affirm "their sexual orientation as God-given, and their experience in relationships with one another as holy, life-giving and grace-filled."

While members of the commission acknowledged that there is no scientific consensus about the causes of homosexuality, they agreed that "homosexual orientation is not morally culpable or inconsistent with being a committed Christian." The commission voted to recommend a resolution to the General Convention that would leave decisions regarding the ordination of homosexuals squarely in the hands of local dioceses and diocesan bishops. The commission urged the church to open itself to ordaining gay and lesbian candidates "otherwise qualified who display the same integrity in their sexual relationships that we ask of our heterosexual ordinands."

The call for continued openness was expressed by Bishop Frederick Borsch of Los Angeles, chairman of the House of Bishops committee on theology. In the April issue of his diocesan newspaper, *Episcopal News*, Borsch said that "these issues are part of our God-given world in which we all live, and which, I believe, God wants us to deal with faithfully and honestly. I am proud of a church that is able to do this."

Borsch also said that the commission's proposal that dioceses and diocesan bishops determine qualifications of candidates for ordination will ensure that "particular and pastoral aspects of consideration of qualified gay and lesbian persons for ordination be dealt with in the diocese where there will be close and personal knowledge of the evangelical circumstances and needs and opportunities of the local community of faith."

A majority of the commission also recommended that the church's Standing Liturgical Commission consider forms for the blessing of same-sex relationships. Members felt it appropriate to bless persons of the same sex "who are in faithful, committed relationships" in which sacrificial love is present. Doing so would not, the report said, jeopardize the support within Christian community for Christian marriage between men and women.

Bruce Garner, president of Integrity, a national organization of gay and lesbian Episcopalians, said that he believes the Hunt Commission report offers a reasonable approach. "We haven't had an honest discussion of the issues. It's seen as a legislative concern, but we are human beings."



### **Canon on sexual morality is proposed**

Shortly after the Hunt Commission's report was completed, Bishop William Frey, dean of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Ambler, Pennsylvania, announced that he would propose a new canon on clergy sexual morality that would effectively eliminate the question of admitting noncelibate homosexuals to the ordination process.

Frey's proposal would place clergy "under the obligation...to abstain from sexual relations outside of Holy Matrimony." In a recent interview Frey said, "I believe that Holy Matrimony is the biblical sexual ethic. Anything else is outside the bounds of the church's position."

Although Frey's proposal is also aimed at setting a standard to hold clergy accountable in cases of sexual misconduct, some observers in the church have suggested that his proposal would effectively end the church's discussion of homosexuality. Frey denied the suggestion and is convinced that dialogue will continue.

Frey said that there is a great deal of unrest in the church over the current debate on sexuality, and a feeling that the church should move on to the consideration of other subjects. "The sexuality tail is wagging the dog. I'd like to see other issues come to the fore," he said.

Frey predicted that his proposal will gather widespread support throughout the church, and noted that he has received expressions of support from bishops who belong to the Iranneus fellowship, a study group of 60 bishops who support traditional teachings of the church.

### **How do the deputies feel?**

Although the bishops of the Episcopal Church have had occasion to discuss the issue of homosexuality since the 1988 General Convention in Detroit, a true measure of the sentiment in the House of Deputies is more difficult to gauge. Whether the simmering debate on homosexuality will come to a boil will likely be decided by clergy and lay delegates to the Phoenix meeting.

One lay leader in the church described the ambiguity she faces between the difficult choices that now confront the wider church. "I don't believe the church at large is ready to accept the ordination of avowed, practicing homosexuals, nor is it ready to bless same-sex relationships," said Dixie Hutchinson, member of the deputation from the Diocese of Dallas and past president of Province VII.

Yet, Hutchinson doubted that changes in the current policy--either way--would advance the dialogue on the difficult issue. "Thoughtful and reasonable adherence to present canonical requirements serves the church well," she said.



Hutchinson said passage of the Hunt Commission's proposed resolution with the intent of repealing the 1979 resolution "will not resolve current anxieties about human sexuality."

--The Rev. Steve Weston is a parish priest and freelance writer based in Dallas.

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*Issues facing the 70th General Convention in Phoenix*

## **Financial crunch in the church may force tough questions on priorities**

by James Solheim

A financial crisis is sending a shudder through all levels of the Episcopal Church and forcing some serious rethinking of the church's mission in today's world. The crisis may also be straining the connective bonds that hold the church together and make it a unique institution in American society.

The crisis comes at a time when giving at the local level has steadily increased for the last 20 years to a projected total in 1991 of \$1.2 billion. Yet fewer and fewer of those dollars are sent on to the diocesan and national level, forcing cutbacks and adjustments--and some tough questions on priorities.

When Bishop Jerry Winterrowd announced in his first pastoral letter as the new bishop of Colorado a \$75,000 cut in the budget and a revamping of diocesan financial policies, he joined a long list of colleagues throughout the church who have been forced to face a new reality.

The financial crisis in Colorado is played out in dozens of dioceses throughout the Episcopal Church as they scramble to make ends meet. Many are caught in a crunch between obligations to the national church and economic realities on the local level that lead parishes to revise their contributions.

A combination of recession and declining receipts from parishes is forcing many dioceses to change staffing and program. Some are holding on with minor adjustments, perhaps by dipping into reserve funds or delaying



certain expenses. After a few years, however, the Band-Aid measures are not enough, and more drastic action is needed.

In the Diocese of Massachusetts, largest in the Episcopal Church, an anticipated budget crisis forced a total reorganization of the diocesan staff last fall. A decision in the Diocese of Connecticut to move from proportional assessment to a voluntary plan produced a shortfall so severe that \$650,000 was cut from last year's budget and several staff positions were eliminated.

In the Diocese of Central New York, an anticipated \$80,000 deficit is forcing what diocesan council member Wallace Frey called "difficult, important, and fundamental decisions about the future shape and size of the program."

Most Western dioceses in the church are not feeling the pinch as much, but even there adjustments are necessary. "The recession is for real," Bishop Joseph Heistand of Arizona said in announcing \$100,000 of cuts in the diocesan budget. In order to provide a more predictable income, the diocese this year moved to a plan that calls for a 20-percent assessment of each congregation's net disposable income as "the most equitable way to share the responsibility among all congregations."

### Crisis begins at local level

For a variety of reasons, many Episcopal parishes are not meeting their obligations to the diocese. Some report that the demand of local expenses is the main reason. Small parishes, for example, are finding that the cost of upkeep of the physical facilities drains limited financial resources.

Fixed costs, beyond the control of most parishes, add to the problem. "We are feeling the pinch with extremely high medical insurance costs," said Sue Foster, fiscal officer of the Diocese of Eastern Oregon. "It has affected our whole budget--and those dollars paid for medical insurance aren't used elsewhere."

Eastern Oregon is one of the small dioceses supported directly by the national church through a program called Coalition-14 (C-14). As funds available for the coalition have leveled out in recent years, the recent 5-percent cut in the national budget has increased the pressure on programs in C-14, Foster said. One immediate result was discontinuation of the diocesan newspaper.

Some people insist that there is a positive way of interpreting the situation--pointing to parishes responding to challenges on the local and regional level. Many parishes, with ambitious outreach programs, are choosing to concentrate on new forms of outreach ministry on the local level. The Episcopal Church operates more soup kitchens, for example, than any



other denomination in the country. And the commitment to AIDS ministry and economic justice also draw heavily on local resources.

Ann Fontaine of Wyoming, an Executive Council member who serves on the administration, budget, and finance committee, agrees with the observation that parishes are more active in local ministry. "There are a lot of hurting people in our communities, so parishes are taking a much more active interest," she said. She points to an identity issue, contending that it is often difficult for people in the pew to relate to the diocese. "It is harder to feel connected to a diocese--but they have a good sense of what it means to be part of the national church body," Fontaine said.

When asked if she perceives any protest on the local level toward positions taken by the national church, Fontaine told of an encounter on a recent flight with a woman who had just returned to the Episcopal Church. "She is not afraid of the controversy. In fact, that's what she likes about the Episcopal Church--the freedom to ask the tough questions. She thinks the church is the hope of our society, that only the church can teach us a new way to live together."

Others express concern that the trend toward more localized ministries may represent a growing insularity and inwardness that denies one of the unique aspects of the church as an international faith community. The Diocese of Atlanta is making a special effort to help parishes understand their responsibilities to the diocese. "All of us are the diocese--and there are vital ministries that we just can't do unless we support this united mission," said Linda Puckett, diocesan financial administrator.

### **Dioceses pass along pain to national church**

While parishes pass along their own budget crisis to the diocese, an increasing number of dioceses are insisting that the national church absorb some of the pain by learning to live with less income from the dioceses.

The Diocese of Virginia, for example, decided its pledge to the national church should be based on a percentage of the diocesan budget, rather than tied to disposable income at the parish level. Virginia's contribution had reached 36 percent, highest in the church, and was still climbing, so the diocese voted to set the contribution at 25 percent in the future.

It was not an easy decision for the diocese, and some people expressed sadness that the long-held tradition of often pledging more than the national church assessment may have passed into history. Yet the diocese found itself with fewer resources for its own ministry.

The Diocese of Central Florida felt a similar squeeze. "We were caught between two competing systems," Bishop John Howe told the diocesan



convention. "The congregations give to the diocese voluntarily, but the national church assesses the diocese on a formula that year by year leaves the diocese a smaller percentage of net disposable income for its own program, staff, and ministry."

The diocese last year chose to make its own contributions to the national church voluntary. Howe said that it was "not an easy or hastily made decision--in some ways it was very painful. But I believe it was the right one. More and more dioceses around the country are making exactly the same kind of decision, for exactly the same reason."

Diocesan contributions to the national church were a major topic of discussion at the recent Conference of Diocesan Executives. "I was really surprised at the number of dioceses represented that were concerned about national church apportionment. It was a real eye-opener," said Marlene Eaton, assistant treasurer of the Diocese of New Hampshire.

### **Sending the wrong signal?**

While there are signs of a trend in rethinking the contributions of dioceses to the national church, others express reluctance to do so because it would send the wrong signal to parishes.

"We have maintained our dedication to the national church," said Ben Matlock, assistant to the bishop of Western Massachusetts. "We feel if we don't it sets a horrible precedent." Marlene Eaton, assistant treasurer of the Diocese of New Hampshire, expressed a similar sentiment. "We pay the full amount because to ask our parishes for a full amount and then turn around and not give full apportionment to the national church, well, it doesn't say a whole lot. Eaton added, however, that cutting diocesan programs to pay that apportionment is raising some tough questions.

"The diocese is committed to paying its apportionment--in principle," added the Ven. Kent McNair, archdeacon of the Diocese of Northern California. "We feel that if we don't do that, then the churches won't be obligated to pay to the diocese, and the people won't pay to their churches."

Some dioceses have gone to great lengths to fulfill their commitments to the national church. The diocesan council of Massachusetts, for example, dipped into a reserve fund in order to meet its \$905,000 obligation. Bishop David E. Johnson warned that it was time "to make the national church aware of the limitations we are under in Massachusetts and the limits to what we can do over the next three years."

That note of warning is appearing more often in diocesan conventions. "We are beginning to think the unthinkable--cutting our contribution to the national church," observed one administrator from a Southern diocese.



### National church making adjustments

At a recent meeting with staff at the Episcopal Church Center, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning said that most mainline denominations were feeling the financial crunch. The Presbyterian Church (USA) recently put a freeze on staff and all new programs. And the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) faced a substantial budget deficit for the third year in a row. Its financial reserves are depleted, and it now faces deep cuts in staff and program.

"The candy store of the churchwide organization must close now," said ELCA Secretary Lowell Almen. "The time has ended when every interest group, every caucus, every concern, every emphasis, every self-proclaimed representative body, every good intention, every noble effort, and every great program could demand to get whatever was wanted, as if there were no limits."

The ELCA must trim \$5.2 million from its 1991 budget. ELCA's Bishop Herbert Chilstrom wrote out a personal check for \$5,000 to underscore the crisis and said, "If you look at the broader picture, we are not alone."

The financial crisis has been a bit slower in hitting the Episcopal Church because the church's financial planners saw it coming and were able to make adjustments. A freeze on hiring and salaries was put into effect last January and will continue through the end of the year, Browning told the Church Center staff. The Phoenix General Convention will provide a better sense of resources available--and it will set priorities for the coming triennium. Once those priorities are established it is quite possible that there will be adjustments in the organizational structure and staffing at the national level. "There will be changes," Browning warned, almost certainly some staff reductions. Plans for 1992 will be shared with the staff at a special meeting in October.

The national church is learning to live with the new financial reality and has been adjusting to the change in revenues, according to Ellen Cooke, the church's treasurer. She pointed out that revenues and expenses have kept pace, and said that she does not see the financial crisis as a long-term threat. "We are going to have a soft landing," she commented.

As Cooke travels throughout the church, she preaches an up-beat message that the strength of the Episcopal Church is especially evident at the congregational level. "Our congregations are closer to the heart of problems and quicker to respond to realities of life in our society today," she said on returning from speaking at several province meetings. She does detect, however, a feeling at the congregational level that dioceses and the national church don't always see and appreciate the kind of ministry they are doing.

Cooke said that she finds many signs of vitality in the church--and a new



maturity in dealing with all kinds of issues, not only financial ones. "We are still a community. We've been through all kinds of trials, but we are emerging a stronger church," she said. Part of that maturity is based on some new understandings of what community means. "Once we come to terms with the human systems and the basis for community, it is easier to sort out the practical issues.

"The financial crisis is straining relationships in other parts of the globe. Budget cuts have a disproportionate effect on our partners in other churches--and our commitments to international church agencies, such as the World Council of Churches," Cooke continued.

"We are caught in a double crisis--our societies are in trouble economically, and now our churches face further cuts in resources," said Bishop James Ottley of Panama, vice president of the House of Bishops. "These cuts are preventing us from new opportunities for mission in this part of the world--just when the needs are greatest. Not to be able to reach out is very frustrating."

Ottley said that the cuts could be "devastating" for churches in the Third World and necessitate staff cuts. While accepting the financial reality, he is clearly uncomfortable about being put in the position of competing for fewer dollars with other programs of the Episcopal Church.

### Making the tough choices

Vince Currie of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast, who has chaired the administration, finance, and budget committee of the Executive Council for the last three years, said that the national church "must respond to the financial situation and face realities." Describing himself as a conservative businessman, Currie said that it is clear to him that the church has been attempting to do too much, trying to be all things to all people and meet the needs of too many special interest groups. "Sooner or later we must draw the line," he said.

"We must take a hard look at what the church can do best--and turn our attention to the needs of our constituency, the people in the pew," Currie added. Among the issues that he thinks need more attention are traditional areas such as Christian education, evangelism, and stewardship.

Currie agrees with some observers who worry that the connective tissue of the church--between parishes and dioceses, between dioceses and the national church--are being strained. "New members may not always understand what it means to be an Episcopalian, so we must help them understand how we belong to each other," he said. One of the major issues is how to build trust and confidence on all levels of church life, Currie added--



because then the money for our mission will follow.

Contributing to this story were Jeffrey Penn, Sarah Bartenstein (Virginia), Sarah Moore (Idaho), Cary Patrick (Atlanta), William Stump (Maryland), Walt Gordon (Minnesota), Tracy Sukraw (Massachusetts) Barbara Benedict (Colorado), and Anita Monsees (Central New York).

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*Issues facing the 70th General Convention in Phoenix*

## With nine years left, where will the Decade of Evangelism lead the Episcopal Church?

by Jan Nunley

Wherever you find two Episcopalians, you can still find at least three opinions on what evangelism is and how the church ought to go about it.

For Episcopalians in a pluralistic society, evangelism can be a sticky subject. In its report to the General Convention, the Standing Commission on Evangelism noted, "Episcopalians are often reluctant to proclaim with assurance that Jesus Christ is the only way to God. But this ambivalence leads us to an evangelistic dilemma. Why should we proclaim Jesus at all, if other paths are equally acceptable, both to us and to God?"

What is evangelism, Episcopalian style? The General Convention will consider a raft of resolutions aimed at promoting the Decade of Evangelism. It will likely affirm a definition from the 1973 convention that evangelism is "the presentation of Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in such ways that persons may be led to accept him as savior, and follow him as Lord, within the fellowship of the church." Yet, across the church, Episcopalians are already giving shape to the decade in some traditional ways--and some bold new ways.

Evangelism begins with prayer, said Temperance Parker, evangelism coordinator for the Diocese of South Carolina. "We began with an evangelism prayer covenant in January 1990. Then we sponsored a series of lectures by evangelist John Guest, with 'labs' to teach people how to share their faith."



Just what that faith means has to be clarified first, explained Parker: "Part of the thrust of any evangelism program is to evangelize the people in the pews with faithful preaching and teaching. As the church grows and people come into a vital relationship with Jesus, they want to share."

Congregations have to be moved from a "maintenance" mode to a "mission-minded" stance, said Parker. "Proclamation and the presentation of the Gospel intentionally is a very important part of evangelism. It's important to live our faith, too, but it's not enough simply to do good works; our good works must be done in the name of Jesus."

#### 'Holistic evangelism'

The Rev. Wayne Schwab, head of the Evangelism Ministries Office of the Episcopal Church, wants the church to develop what he called a "holistic evangelism." "It's much more a union of word and deed that we may have thought in the beginning," he said. "It seems to be most helpful to talk about evangelism as bringing good news to our daily environment--producing people who are conscious agents of Christ's reign wherever they are."

But what does that mean? Across the country, several examples offer clues.

In Wichita, Kansas, the Rev. Robert V. Parker finds evangelism every time the doors of Venture House open, a ministry of Episcopal Social Services. Parker, a deacon, serves as executive director of the eight-year-old ecumenical effort to serve the homeless of Wichita. "Evangelism," said Parker, "is that part of the mission of the church in which we take some reconciliation and hope and the Good News of who Jesus was out into the world—not necessarily with our motive being that we can seduce them into the confines of our parish walls.

"We too often think of evangelism as church growth for the sake of erecting a bigger building so that we can attract more people like us, so that we can go out and build an addition on the bigger building, so we can attract even more people like us," Mr. Parker said. "Jesus wasn't talking about gathering up the sheep that are kind of like us and have the same socioeconomic and educational background and the same taste. He said, 'Feed the flock.'"

Yet the flock is constantly changing, observed the Rev. Nelson Pinder, rector of St. John-the-Baptist Episcopal Church in Orlando, Florida. "Neighborhoods are changing tremendously," Pinder said. "Those who moved to the suburbs 25 years ago are moving back to the city. Those in the inner city are being moved to the suburbs. Predominantly white parishes in those changing neighborhoods need to be able to work in them instead of selling



property and moving someplace else. When these new people come, we ought to be able to reach out and touch them, invite them into the body of Christ."

The church is the last outpost of segregation in society, said Pinder, and that has to change or the church will die. There's a need to train priests to deal with multicultural and multiracial congregations, for more non-Caucasian clergy and deputies, and an openness to liturgical opportunities to tell the Episcopal Church story: "Our funerals are pieces of evangelism. Weddings are evangelism. We have a group of non-Episcopalians in church, and we have a chance to make people say, 'I want to come back.'"

The General Convention will consider resolutions to promote "new congregation development which will include both ethnic specific models as well as multi-cultural models" and to affirm ministries "among Asiamerican, Black, Hispanic and Native American peoples." However, some wonder whether those resolutions go far enough.

#### **'Blandness is the enemy of evangelism'**

Dr. Louie Crew, an active layperson in the Diocese of Newark, said that evangelism can be as simple as inviting houseguests and friends to worship. Yet, he said that newcomers may be turned off by the racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia they may encounter in church. "I keep going back to Carter Heyward's statement, 'Love without justice is cheap,'" said Crew, the founder of Integrity, a national organization for lesbian and gay Episcopalians. "It's sentimentality; I think that's what's being passed out as evangelism."

Blandness, said Crew, is the deadly enemy of evangelism. "Good news is always going to be misunderstood by the world. Good news is always going to be, 'My gosh—he spends all his time with prostitutes and tax collectors!' I live in a place that has so much bad news around, yet I have so much good news to tell, in terms of what I know about God's redemption."

Telling the story is an integral part of Dr. Lynn Huber's approach to evangelism with older adults in the Diocese of Tennessee, where she is director of Affirmative Aging. "Story sharing is an essential and necessary developmental task for late life, so it's a perfect fit. We think of the church as one of the most important institutions to reach out to older adults, but I've come to believe that the church is dependent on them for models of what spiritual life is."

Sharing her own story wasn't always easy for Huber. "I used to think Episcopal evangelism was an oxymoron," she said. "Then I heard Wayne Schwab say that 'if you found gasoline that cost ten cents a gallon in unlimited quantities and every mile you drove your car went better than before, you'd tell your friends about it. If you tell me that Jesus Christ is the most



important thing in your life but I never hear you talk about him, then I don't believe you.' I said, 'Okay, Wayne, I'm an evangelist.'

Throughout the church, attention to the needs of the aging are feeding a need for new models to enable evangelism in that group. In the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, for example, an 87-year-old woman was recently ordained a priest to serve in her retirement community. The General Convention will consider a resolution to "affirm the ministry of evangelism among the aging by recruiting and utilizing the diverse skills and experiences of the aging as a valuable resource... [and] allocating significant financial, personnel, and material resources of the church to develop this ministry...."

The Episcopal Church's congregational development officer, Arlin Rothauge, maintains that evangelism is more than just telling a story; it's listening and offering as well. "We fantasize that we have a franchise on the Gospel, that God constructed the Gospel and gave it to us. In fact he just offered himself and said, 'What will you do?' Until we are ready to say the Gospel is free to express itself in other peoples' lives in any way it wishes and we will declare that wholesome and exciting, we're very limited."

#### **How do you measure the decade's success?**

What would count as success for the Decade of Evangelism? "I'm not sure we've gotten deep enough to answer that," Rothauge said. "Whether we're going to have the courage to work on apologetics and indigenization of the Gospel and the strengthening of congregational life, I don't know." Rothauge sees the interest in small group ministry as an encouraging sign, but warned that "the last time that happened it was the Wesleys, and we know what the traditional church did to that."

Maintaining the integrity of Anglican tradition is important to Dr. John Booty, historiographer for the Episcopal Church. The former dean of the School of Theology at Sewanee fears that an emphasis on evangelism may crowd out the kind of critical thinking that makes Episcopalians what they are. And as for the numbers? "The church is going to continue to decline in membership. There's no reason why God should want the Episcopal Church to grow; the success of the kingdom of God does not depend upon the Episcopal Church. And it may, in the economy of things, be right that we not grow--because if we are obedient to the Gospel, we may not grow in numbers and financial wealth. But I think it will have greater integrity in the eyes and lives of people."

Bishop John MacNaughton of the Diocese of West Texas takes the opposite view from Booty. For him, evangelism is unequivocally growth--in all its forms. "The Decade of Evangelism is going to be successful because it



is God's decade, not ours," MacNaughton said. "The only question is whether the Episcopal Church will decide to participate, and where it does, it will be larger, more spiritually oriented and filled; its stewardship will be stronger and its social outreach broader and more effective, because it will not be based on some political agenda but on a spiritual energy."

MacNaughton said that he believes evangelism should be the number-one priority of the church, and it should be explicitly evangelism, not social service or liturgy or Christian education: "To the extent that everything becomes evangelism, nothing is evangelism. And that's the temptation of the leadership of the church: to defend what we've been doing by calling everything evangelism."

Nine years remain in the Decade of Evangelism, and three more General Conventions. No one is sure just what the Episcopal Church will look like when the decade is officially over, but the words of an essay by Dr. Huber may hold a key.

"The Episcopal Church," Huber wrote, "has always had four major streams from which to draw: Evangelical, Catholic, Charismatic, and Liberal. Each has its function within the church--Evangelicals emphasize Scripture, Catholics emphasize the liturgy, Charismatics emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit, and Liberals emphasize inclusiveness and social service." None should be left out, and in fact, Huber said, the best thing would be for Episcopalians "to become...Catholic, Evangelical, Charismatic, Liberal Christian(s). Come on in; the water's fine!"

--Jan Nunley is a freelance writer and a student at Episcopal Divinity School.

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*Newsmaker Interview*

## Bishop Joseph Heistand of Arizona is a long-time champion of civil rights

by Ben Winton

Ever since he confronted the issue of racism as a young priest in Richmond, Virginia, Joseph T. Heistand found himself to be at times a



mediator, and at times the catalyst for racial equality. Now as bishop of Arizona, Heistand remains in the middle of a racial debate, one in which he worries Episcopalians are only giving "lip service" to the creed that "we're all one family."

Since November 1990, when Arizona voters narrowly rejected a paid holiday in honor of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., the church has engaged in a sometimes heated debate over how to make the best witness to civil rights in the face of the defeat of the holiday.

This summer, as Arizona continues its struggle over whether to create a paid holiday, the issue is expected to have a major impact on the Episcopal Church's 1991 General Convention in Phoenix.

Heistand, whose diocese plays host to the convention, welcomes the debate as "a gift," a chance for Episcopalians to explore feelings about race.

### **Soft-spoken, steel-willed**

The church's special Executive Council meeting in January in Newark voted to affirm the earlier decision to meet in Phoenix. It was there that Heistand, a man coworkers call soft-spoken but steel-willed, spoke passionately in support of Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning's desire to go to Phoenix in order to make "a vigorous witness" in favor of civil rights.

The national church's debate has focused attention on the sharp difference of opinions on race within the church, and on the small progress the church has made in nearly four decades on the race issue, Heistand said during interviews at his Phoenix office this spring.

"My hope is the national church will see the Episcopal Church in Arizona working for civil rights and that the people of Arizona will see the Episcopal Church as a community of diverse backgrounds, able to work together," Heistand said. He worries that four decades of relative unchanged racial sentiments means that the church is failing to take a hard enough look at racism.

Heistand said his "strong sense of justice," not a desire to put the Arizona diocese in the spotlight, motivated his efforts to keep the General Convention in Phoenix. "God made of one blood all the races of mankind. Blood is blood," Heistand said.

### **Early life influenced views on race**

It was Heistand's experience as a young adult, and later his experiences in Richmond, that solidified his strong convictions on racial equality.

Prior to his 1952 ordination, Heistand said he was "trying to find some answers to the meaning of life." In World War II, he served in the 3rd



Infantry Division in Africa and the Middle East.

"I was disillusioned over the stupidity of war. The destruction of human life, the land, buildings, a nation's history. I came out of the war as a cynic, probably an agnostic," Heistand said. After the war, he went to work as a salesman for International Harvester and was successful. But life was empty, Heistand said. It was the influence of his father, the Rt. Rev. John Thomas Heistand, that eventually led the younger Heistand to enter seminary. "My father said, 'You're part of the human race. You have to play a part. Do what you can in it.'"

"I never could stand seeing people bullied or put down," Heistand said. By the time he went to Richmond, his sense of justice was ready to be tested. Heistand found himself in the middle of the furor as rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Richmond--the "Cathedral of the Confederacy."

In the city of Richmond, segregation laws were downright cruel, Heistand said. Blacks found it difficult to find access to health care. Anglican friends from Africa could not dine with Heistand, who is white, in Richmond's segregated restaurants. Virginia was caught up in the fight to oppose the U.S. Supreme Court's *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* decision. Episcopal schools were also segregated.

"To be there, in the midst of it, to hear some of the horror stories, just violated my sense of justice," Heistand said.

Quietly, as he still does on social justice issues, Heistand set about to work for equality. He met with black pastors. At one of the first meetings, white pastors met with black pastors.

"The whites asked the blacks, 'Just what are you struggling for?'" Heistand said. "The blacks said, 'The same thing as you. We don't want anything more than you have. We don't want anything less.'"

Within a year, the first steps toward integration had begun. Heistand joined with other religious leaders to effect a planned and peaceful integration of all public facilities in the city of Richmond.

In one area of change, the reform took place within a church-related institution. Several private schools in Virginia were racially segregated. "We had nine private schools in the Diocese of Virginia," Heistand said. "I was on the board of trustees for all nine schools, including St. Catherine's, a girl's school." Heistand reported that the announcement by the trustees of St. Catherine's that they would desegregate was met with some angry reaction.

"I got hate letters. My wife got obscene phone calls. My children were shunned at school. It lets you know, however, you were being effective," Heistand said.

By the time Martin Luther King was killed by an assassin's bullet, the



struggle over racism had reached an impasse in Richmond.

"We had a lot of racially oriented vandalism in town around the time King was killed. I sang 'We Shall Overcome' so many times on the steps of the State Capitol I was hoarse," Heistand said.

### Racial battles in the church continue

As the Diocese of Virginia struggled with its racism, so did the rest of the church, Heistand said.

During the 1967 General Convention in Seattle, racial unrest was simmering. By August 11, 1965, the Watts riots in California had set the stage for what would be 257 racial uprisings throughout America over the next three years. Thirty-five people died in the Watts riots, the result of blacks' frustrations over not getting the financial and social equality promised by civil rights legislation. Instead, they continued to live in poverty, with high unemployment, in the face of tense and often overbearing police powers.

In 1967 Presiding Bishop John Hines proposed reshaping the entire General Convention program and urged taking the operating budget and using it to help communities such as Watts. Heistand said he agreed with the measure--but he was disappointed with Episcopalians' reactions. "If you think that the upheaval and debate over women's ordination and the 1979 Book of Common Prayer were something, you should have seen this. People were angry," Heistand said. Some dioceses cut funding in protest of the presiding bishop's move.

In some ways, the racial differences remained unchanged, Heistand said. "This debate over Martin Luther King is nothing new."

Heistand said that he has always opposed moving the General Convention out of protest. "My question has been, 'Where would Jesus be?'" Heistand said. "I believe Jesus would come to Phoenix. He has always been where there was injustice, self-righteousness, prejudice. And there will always be injustice, self-righteousness, prejudice. It's part of our basic insecurity as human beings."

### Diocese of Arizona, Navajos prove diversity of church

Heistand came to Arizona in 1969, as rector of St. Philip's in the Hills Church in Tucson.

"When I became bishop coadjutor, I had jurisdiction for the Episcopal Church in Navajoland, and I developed a love for the Indian people," Heistand said. "They are an amazing, generous, loving, humorous people. Theirs is an entirely different culture than ours." Yet they share a common quest for spirituality, for knowledge, for belief in God, he continued.



Developing a relationship with the Indians came naturally for Heistand, not so much because of his past in Richmond, but because of his goals for the church. Heistand had two major goals for the Diocese of Arizona when he became bishop in 1979: make it financially viable and increase teaching, stewardship, and evangelism.

Heistand puts his convictions on social justice issues into action. Episcopal Community Services (ECS) seeks to meet needs of the community, such as homelessness, hunger, and medical care for the Mexicans living on the Arizona-Mexico border. The ECS budget has grown from \$5,000 15 years ago to \$500,000 this year.

Heistand points to the relationship between the Diocese of Arizona and the Navajos as a symbol of how diversity can make a stronger church. He said that Bishop Steven Plummer of Navajoland said it best, "There is no Black church. No Indian church. No Hispanic church. Only one church, and I belong to it." Heistand asked Presiding Bishop Browning to invite the Navajoland Area Mission to be cohost of the 1991 General Convention.

Heistand is nearing retirement now. By June 1992, the 27,000-member Arizona diocese will have selected a replacement for Heistand, who hopes to move into a ministry closer to the people in the pews.

In 39 years in the ministry, Heistand said that the bulk of his life has been devoted to helping people "come to know Christ, to find out he really is an answer to their lives." It was what he learned in the Gospel that gave him a strong sense of social justice. "The Gospel really is an answer to a lot of the questions in life. It gives solid direction," he said.

--Ben Winton is a writer for the *Phoenix Gazette*.

(Editors note: An incorrectly numbered photograph of Bishop Heistand is included in this packet of ENS.)

